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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JULY 28-31, 2007

**¶1.** This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for July 28-31, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL:

**¶2.** HURRIYET/SABAH/CUMHURIYET/YENI SAFAK/SABAH: After escaping to Northern Iraq last week, Riza Altun, the PKK militant in charge of its monetary traffic in Europe and accused of embezzlement, was asked to attend a meeting participated by high ranking PKK operatives in the Kandil Mountain. It is claimed that as a result of explosion of a bomb used by a suicide militant, the suicide bomber and three high ranking PKK administrators in the meeting were killed. The bombing is attributed to the internal dispute between Murat Karayilan, the overall in charge of PKK, and Syrian origin Feyman Huseyin, who is in charge of PKK's armed wing. Murat Karayilan escaped the explosion by not attending the meeting at the last minute.

**¶3.** EVRENSEL/GUNDEM: The Administrative Case Offices Committee of the Supreme Court accepted the objection filed against dismissal of the Mayor of Sur District of Diyarbakir, Abdullah Demirbas, and dissolving the municipal council. The 8th Office of the Supreme Court will retry the case. The new mayor will not be elected until the case has been finalized. A temporarily appointed mayor is fulfilling the mayoral position. Mayor Abdullah Demirbas and the Municipal Committee were dismissed for introducing multilingualism and multiculturalism in municipal services.

**¶4.** SABAH/GUNDEM/RADIKAL: The Criminal Peace Court in Beytussebab district of Hakkari sentenced the DTP Mayor, Faik Dursun, to 1.5 years of imprisonment on charges of insulting the sub-governor and the security director during a press conference. He criticized the sub-governor for refusing the Municipal Board's January 12, 2007 decision to give Kurdish names to streets in Beytussebab.

**¶5.** YENI SAFAK/HURRIYET: The High Election Board in Hakkari reversed the objection filed by the DTP-supported independent candidate, Sebahattin Suvagci. According to the unofficial results of the election in Hakkari, Suvagci had been elected to the parliament but he lost his seat to the AKP candidate after the votes in the border gates were counted.

**¶6.** GUNDEM: Two inspectors from the Interior Ministry took a deposition from the Mayor of Sirnak, Ahmet Ertak, who is alleged to have said "PKK should be supported" and "We are supporting the PKK" in an interview he had in Kurdish on the French-24 TV

channel. Ertak denied those statements.

¶7. EVRENSEL/RADIKAL/CUMHURIYET/GUNDEM: The indictment prepared by the Diyarbakir Public Prosecutor has been asking 3.5 years of imprisonment for the Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir, the Sur District Mayor Abdullah Demirbas, and the municipal board of the Sur Municipality. The Sur mayor and municipal board members had adopted a policy of applying "multilingualism and multiculturalism" in municipal services, and this decision was endorsed by the Diyarbakir Mayor, Osman Baydemir, as well. The mayors' hearing is scheduled for November 7. Charges have been pressed against the Diyarbakir Mayor Baydemir and the Baglar Mayor Yurdusev Ozsokmenler for publishing anti-littering materials in the Kurmanci and Zaza dialects of Kurdish.

¶8. CUMHURIYET: The National Chairperson of HAK-PAR, Sertac Bucak, said the claims that circulated prior the July 22 General Election that the "Republic is under threat" proved to be false. In a press release at his party's office in Diyarbakir, Mr. Bucak said that the Turkish General Staff delivered an e-memorandum on the pretext of the Presidential election, and that it amassed troops along the border, and made plans to attack Northern Iraq. Mr. Bucak concluded that people did not tolerate creating tension and "stopped" those in favor of a coup d'etat.

#### SECURITY

¶9. CUKUROVA HURRIYET/BOLGE/ZAMAN/GUNDEM: Based on a tip, teams from the Adana and Mersin Security Directorates arrested seven persons who were members of the Mustazaflar Dernegi (The Oppressed People's Association) in Adana and Mersin on the grounds of membership to the outlawed Hizbulah Organization. One unlicensed weapon, 74 bullets, organizational documents,

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false ID cards and driving licenses were found in the searches conducted at the houses and businesses of the suspects.

¶10. ZAMAN/BOLGE: The Turkish General Staff announced that a PKK militant surrendered to the GOT forces in Yedisu district of Bingol. The GOT forces seized 1 Kalashnikov weapon, 5 clips, 125 bullets, 21 bombs, 140 electrical fuses, 5 kilos of C-4 explosive, 150 meters of detonators, 87 BCK bullets, 1 RPG-7 rocket, and a large quantity of food stuffs in the places shown to them by the PKK deserter. Another PKK militant also surrendered to the security officials in Akcay village of Sirnak, and the GOT forces scanning rural Eruh of Siirt found lots of survival materials in the shelters and dwellings used by the PKK militants.

¶11. SABAH/ZAMAN/GUNDEM/YENI SAFAK/HURRIYET: PKK militants, who tried to get food in Tunekpinar village of Eruh in Siirt province, killed Mahmut Dayan (58) when the villagers rejected to give them any food items, the Siirt Governor's office disclosed. An operation, participated by village guards, has been launched. The Gundem newspaper claimed that Mahmut Dayan had been held responsible for the killing of 7 PKK members in Cirav Mountain on May 7.

¶12. GUNDEM: Following her interrogation at the Caldiran jandarma outpost in Van province, Hatice Atsak (45), the DEHAP's former district chairman, Medeni Atsak's wife, who was arrested in Yuvacik village, was put in the F-type prison of Van after she was arraigned. Mrs. Aksak is accused of making propaganda for an illegal organization.

¶13. ZAMAN/BOLGE: The Agri Governorate disclosed that 2 PKK militants surrendered to GOT forces with their weapons and 2 hand grenades. Based on the depositions of the deserters, three persons who had allegedly assisted and harbored the PKK militants have been imprisoned by the court.

¶14. ZAMAN: It is reported that a high-tech back-pack radio device of PKK has been seized. The back-pack radio, which is produced only by four companies in the world, provides

uninterrupted communication in war zones and performs critical services such as skipping frequencies and encryption. The Turkish General Staff announced that an explosive planted by the terrorist organization members was discovered in the mountainous region of Lice district of Diyarbakir. GOT forces seized 1 kilo 840 grams of dynamite sticks, 4 kilos 550 grams of explosives, and 18 electric fuses in the mountainous Zorkun resort of Osmaniye.

¶15. RADIKAL/CUMHURIYET/RADIKAL: In Mersin, of the 55 bureaucrats, politicians and contractors detained for irregularities in bids on government contracts, 27 were imprisoned following their arraignment.

¶16. GUNDEM: On July 27, the GOT forces launched an operation in Mus province and Dallitepe, Gol, and Xapik regions of Bingol province where 3 soldiers were killed and 1 village guard and 3 soldiers were wounded. The Turkish General Staff disclosed that 1 village guard had been wounded in clashes with the PKK members in the rural Mus. It is reported that the operation participated by many village guards has been intensified in the Besta Mountain of Sirnak and that the area is constantly bombed by jets.

¶17. ZAMAN/HURRIYET: As a result of the clashes between the GOT forces and PKK militants in the rural Nusaybin of Mardin, 1 sergeant was killed and 2 soldiers were wounded. The wounded soldiers have been taken to the military hospital in Diyarbakir by a helicopter. A large scale operation has been launched to arrest the dissidents.

¶18. EVRENSEL/RADIKAL/GUNDEM: The security officials arrested 15 persons, including administrators and officials from the Patriot Forces Unified Movement (an ultranationalist group made up of retired military officers), in an operation dubbed "Whirlpool-2" in Diyarbakir on July 27. Police seized 1 long-barreled Kalashnikov weapon, 6 pistols and lots of documents during the searches conducted in the association and the businesses and houses of the detainees. The detainees are accused of 25 types of crimes including "forming an armed organization; fraud; involvement in judiciary cases; and intriguing bids."

¶19. EVRENSEL: Charges have been pressed against 22 persons in  
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Eskisehir and 15 others in Bursa for attending the hearing at a court in Eskisehir of Ugur Kaymaz (12) who had been killed with 13 bullets in Kiziltepe of Mardin on July 19, 2005. They are charged with instigating people, chanting illegal slogans, and resisting the police.

¶20. GUNDEM: The Chief Village Guard, Iskender Ertus, Democrat Party's top one parliamentary candidate from Van, has been putting pressure on people in Baskale district of Van after he lost the election. Some people have been moving from the district because of the pressure and threats they have been receiving from the chief village guard. It is also reported that 16 temporary workers at the Baskale State Hospital have been terminated for having cast their vote to the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP). It is also claimed that Ertus had ties with the perpetrators of the bombing in Semdinli of Hakkari on November 9, 2005. It is claimed that the jandarma has been threatening residents from the Bostan and Belen villages of Dargecit district in Mardin for having voted for DTP, and the villagers claimed that the jandarma gave them tickets for no grounds while they were driving back and forth to their fields.

#### CRIME & LAW ENFORCEMENT

¶21. RADIKAL/CUMHURIYET: The dead body of young women, Halise Taskin (21), who was shot in the head, was found in a trash dump of the municipality of Suruc district of Sanliurfa three days ago. She was buried by a group of ten people, including her father. No other family members attended her funeral or accepted condolences for her death. Becoming suspicious of the event,

jandarma detained Halise Taskin's husband Salih Binici with whom she had been married for a month and had no official marriage certificate. The security forces have been trying to clarify this case which might be an honor killing. Approximately 30 women from the Yasamevi Women Association, DTP's Women Organization, Human Rights Association, and Mazlumder visited Taskin's grave and protested the honor killing.

¶22. BOLGE: The Anti-narcotic Team from the Gaziantep Security Directorate launched an operation against drug users and sellers in the city center. A two month preparation had been made for the operation dubbed "Clean Valley," during which 1 kilo and 6 grams of heroin was seized and 11 persons had been detained, the officials said.

¶23. SABAH GUNES: 56 refugees (37 Afghans, 13 Bangladeshis and 6 Pakistanis), who had illegally crossed into Van province of Turkey from Iran, were arrested in a truck in Sanliurfa when they were on their way to Greece through Istanbul. The refugees, aged between 20 and 35 years, had agreed on paying 8,000 US dollars per person to the truck driver for taking them to Istanbul. The authorities said that the refugees had forged passports and would be deported from Turkey after they were surrendered to the security officials.

¶24. EKSPRES: The jandarma seized 78 kilograms of heroin in the trailer of a tractor near Kerimler village of Mersin. One person with O.G. initials has been detained for involvement in drug trafficking.

¶25. CUKUROVA HURRIYET: The Anti-smuggling and Organized Crime Team from the Provincial Jandarma Command of Gaziantep seized 606,300 kilos of granulated and 12,257 kilos of cubic sugar that had been smuggled into the country. The smugglers were aiming to push the sugar into the market after putting false tags and changing the expire-dates of the sugar which had already expired. Three persons have been detained for involvement in the smuggling.

#### ECONOMY

¶26. RADIKAL: Hamdullah Gunes, an entrepreneur from Batman, who started to manufacture dolls wearing the traditional local costumes, is facing trouble since some locals have spread the word that his dolls were idols and it was a sin to buy them according to the Islamic faith. Mr. Gunes, who was awarded for his contribution to the promotion of his region by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is trying to obtain a fatwa from the mufti of Batman in order to run his workshop. The mufti is awaiting guidance from the Department of Religious Affairs about the issue.

¶27. EKSPRES/GUNDEM: The President of the Cukurova Agriculture Mediators Association, Nevzat Alban, said that the agriculture

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workers worked up to 15 hours a day but earned 13 US dollars, which is less than the daily minimum wage of 15 US dollars. Mr. Alban said because of extensive mechanization in agriculture, the need for manpower had decreased and that the landlords were thus able to find cheap labor.

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